

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DACCA 04034 211026Z

ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 SIL-01

LAB-04 EA-07 /096 W

-----013938 211433Z /45

R 210805Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5489

INFO USUN NEW YORK 1102

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 4034

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, US, BG

SUBJECT: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: STANCE OF BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT

REFS: A. STATE 159747; B. 76 DACCA 1029

1. THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN LAST YEAR'S RESPONSE

(REFTEL B) REMAINS GENERALLY VALID.

2. WE WOULD, HOWEVER, EMPHASIZE THAT BANGLADESHI CONSIDERS ITSELF VERY MUCH A PART OF THE ISLAMIC GROUP. AS WE HAVE POINTED OUT IN OTHER REPORTING, PRESIDENT ZIA HAS GREATLY EXTENDED BANGLADESH'S CONTACTS WITH ISLAMIC COUNTRIES, AND HAS CHANGED ONE OF THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF STATE POLICY" FROM "SECULARISM" TO CONFORMITY WITH ISLAMIC LAW AND TRADITION. THE MOTIVES FOR THESE ACTIONS ARE TWO FOLD: (1) TO PLAY DOMESTICALLY TO ORTHODOX ISLAMIC OPINION AND THEREBY GAIN LOCAL SUPPORT, AND (2) TO ASSURE BANGLADESH ACCESS TO DEVELOPMENT FUNDS FROM OIL RICH ISLAMIC COUNTRIES. HE HAS BEEN AT LEAST MODERATELY SUCCESSFUL IN BOTH ENDEAVORS.

3. THEREFORE, WE CAN EXPECT THE BANGLADESH WILL TAKE

WHATEVER POSITION IS TAKEN BY THE ISLAMIC GROUP ON

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PAGE 02 DACCA 04034 211026Z

ALMOST ANY QUESTION WITHOUT RESPECT TO ANY REPRESENTATIONS WE MIGHT MAKE ON THE OTHER SIDE. AS WE WERE TOLD AT THE TIME OF CONSULTATIONS ON THE RECENT ILO MEETING, BANGLADESH RECOGNIZED THE NEED TO AVOID CONFRONTATION AT GENEVA, BUT IT WOULD FOLLOW WHATEVER COURSE THE ISLAMIC GROUP SET.

4. HOWEVER, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT BANGLADESH
WILL BE RECEPTIVE TO APPROACHES ON ISSUES WHICH MIGHT
BE DESCRIBED AS "NON-ISLAMIC" AND, AS ON KOREA IN THE PAST,
MIGHT FIND IT CONVENIENT FOR ITS REPRESENTATIVES AT
INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS TO ABSTAIN OR BE ABSENT FROM
THE VOTE.

5. MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS OFFICER IS POLITICAL
COUNSELOR CRAIG BAXTER.
BERGESEN

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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